

The Argument vpon the first

Epistle of S. Paule the Apostle to the Thessa-
lonians by Des. Erasmus of Rote-
rodaime.



Thessalonica is the principall Cittie of Mac-
donia: wherof the inhabitauntes of the countrey are cal-
led Thessalonians. They, whan they had once recea-
ued the faith, persisted in it with suche a constancie, that
they suffred, accordaning to Paules example, persecutions
euen of their owne Citezens, with a glad stomacke and
without shynkyng, so as the false Apostles could turne
them by no maner of perswasion, from the ordinaunce of
the gospell. And yet Paule beeynge afraied of it, because he knewe the false
Apostles ouerthwartnes wel ynough by experiance, inasmuche as he could
not go see them himselfe, he sent Timotheus: by whome, whan he was re-
turned, Paule hauyng reporte of they; constancie, prayseth them, with than-
kes geuyng to God. This matter he treateth of in the first and second Cha-
piters. In the other three, he instructeth them in sondrie offices of godly-
nesse, signifying vnto them as it were with priuie ynclyninges, that there were
some among them, whiche were not yet altogether pure from all vncleane
demeanoure of lyuyng: and that they were not all without suche, as beeynge
geuen to loyteryng, were a chargeable burthen to others: and a sorte of bus-
sye bodyes that disturbe the quietnesse of they; congregacion, he commaun-
deth to be correcte. Moreouer where some were not of a throughtly con-
firmed Judgement as yet, concertenng the resurreccyon, seyng they beway-
led they; dead frendes, as though they had perished and not rather depar-
ted vnto better promocions, them he enstructeth and confirmeth. And on the
other syde, where some disputed of the daye of the Lordes commyng, as
though it might well haue bene soeknowen and tolde of before, where as it
is vncertayne to all men: Paule sayeth it shal come sodaynly, and whā
no man looketh fo; it: to the intent we shoulde be the more ready
at every moment. This Epistle he wroote from Athenes by
Tichicus a ministre after the grebes writtinges: and
our Latine argumentes saye also, that Onesi-
mus bare hym cumpayne: howbeit there
is no certayne auctour in the com-
mune exemplares.

CThe ende of the Argument.

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The paraphrase of Erasmus

vpon the first Epistle of the Apostle S.
Paule to the Thessalonians.

The f. Chapiter.

Paul and Siluanus and Timothe. vnto the congregacion of the Thessalonians, in God the father, and in the Lorde Jesus Christ. Grace be vnto you, and peace from God our father, and from the Lorde Jesus Christ. We geue God thankes alwaye for you all, making mention of you in our prayers without ceasyng, and call you to remembraunce because of the worke of your fayth and labour in loue, and because pe haue continued in the hope of our Lorde Jesus Christ, in the light of God our father.



Aul and Siluanus and Timothe, vnto the congregacion of the Thessalonians, cōsenting together in God the father and in our Lorde Jesus Christ: wishe vnto you grace and peace. We reioyce, as it is conuenient we shold, for your good forewardenesse, and rendre thankes alwayes vnto God, making mention of all you, on the behalfe of you all, as often as we talke with God in holy supplications, in that, it can neuer be out of our myndes, how diligently you traauayled to defend the profession of your fayth: than what exceeding labour you toke for the loue, that you beare vnto the preachers of the gospel: how māfūlly and without shrinking you abode al thinges, through the hope and expectation of the rewardes, which our Lorde Jesus Christ hath promysed in the lyfe to come, vnto them that for his names sake care not for the displeasures of this lyfe. You shall not lose the hyre of your well doinges, for God our father that seeth vpon what respecte you did them, is he that shall paye the hyre.

We knowe brethren (beloued of God) holwe that ye are electe. For our gospel came not vnto you by woerde onely, but also by power, and by the holy ghost, and by muche certaintie, as pe knowe, after what maner we behaued our selfes among you, for your sake. And pe became folowers of vs and of the Lorde receyving the woerde with muche affiction, with ioy of the holy ghost: so that pe were an ensample to al that beleue in ḡ accedonia and Achala. For from you sounded out the woerde of the Lorde, not in ḡ accedonia and in Achala onely: but your fayth also whiche pe haue vnto God, spred her selfe abode in all quartars, so that it nedeth not vs to speake any thyng at all. For they themselues shewe of you, what maner of entryng in we had vnto you & holwe pe turned to God from ymages, for to serue the lyuing and true God, and for to loke for his sonne from heauen, whom he rayled from death: cuen Iesus, whiche deliuerteþ vs from the wrath to come.

You your selfes knowe, welbeloued brethren, that you were not chaunged by the persuasion of man, but that you were chosen to these purposes euen by the will of God. Neither yet haue we so slenderly preached the gospel vnto you, as nothyng hath been shewed vnto you sauyng bare woordes, but the power of God hath confirmed our doctrine euen with euident miracles. And the holy ghost was also geue by vs, so that we were behinde in nothing, that shold in any wise make for the perfite beleuyng of the gospels doctrine. For whatsoeuer they of Jewry atteineid by other mens preaching, the same did you also atteine at our gospel teaching. And in this behalfe, how sincerely, how humbly, and how painefullly we behaued our selfes among you, you can tell wel ymough. For there was no thing whereby we myght wynne you vnto Christe, but we abode it. And you for your parte shewed not your selues vntowarde scholars, but you

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the. i. Epistle

folowed streyght after the example of vs , yea rather not of vs but of the Loide Jesu , that humbled himselfe so lowe and suffred al thinges, that he might wyne vs vnto himselfe. For you haue so hartely embraced our gospell preaching, that for the loue of it you haue suffred afflictions patiently, howe many and howe grevous soever they were, not onely with muche boldenesse, but also with muche gladnesse, because the holy goste, whom you receyued by our preaching as a pledge for the time, of the felicitie to come, hath placed himselfe in your hartes : through hope of which felicitie, al sorowes become swete, whatsoeuer are layed vpon vs for the gospel of Christe. And the valiauntnesse of your fayth was so passing excellent, that you were an ensample to al the faythfull in the rest of Macedonia and Achaia .

Thessalonia and Achaia. for the example of that noble chiche citie moued all mennes mindes so soye, that the fame of the gospel sounded as it were the noyse of a Trumpet wypde and brode, and published the feruencie of your fayth, that you haue to Godwarde , not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in all other countreys: so that nowe we see it is no nede for vs to make reporte of your godlynesse. For if we begynne at any time to speake of those matters , they are more readye of theyr owne mynde to tell vs, being instructed by the commune brute , than we can tell them : howe we entred firste vnto you to open the Gospels doctrine, and with what diligent readinesse you receyued vs setting al perils asyde, that seemed like to

God make happen vnto you for our sakes, and howe easly you were trayned from the supersticion of your forefathers, wherwith you worshipped the images of deuils, vnto the true worshipp of God: so as euer sence that tyme you abhorre false and dead Gods, and serue the true living God: and trusing vpon his promises, you passe nothing vpon y^e pleasures of this lyfe, no more than you do vpon the displeasures of it : but looke that his sonne Jesus (by whom he hath deliuered vs freely vnto saluaciō, & promised vs the rewardes of the lyfe to come) shal come againe from heauen, and geue opēly vnto the world, the thinges that he hath promised. for God raysed hym vp againe vnto lyfe to this ende, that we might also be raysed againe vnto lyfe by hym , and to haue the fructacion of the good thinges that never shall dye, which in this life suffre the displeasures of this worlde for his sake. And than his commynng shalbe ioysfully welcome vnto vs, inasmuche as he hath cleansed vs from our sinnes in his owne bloude, and reconciled vs vnto God, and deliuered vs from the eternall punishmente that was due for our transgressions.

The. ii. Chapter.

The terte. For ye your selues (brethren) knowe of our entraunce in vnto you, howe that it was not in wayne : but euen after that we had suffred before , and were shamefully entreated at philippos (as ye knowe) then were we holde in our God, to speake vnto you the gospell of God, in muche steyning. For our exhortacion was not to bring you to errore , nor yet to vnclenes, neither was it with gple: bat as we were allowed of God that the gospel shoulde be committed vnto vs : euen so we spake, not as they that plese menne , but God, whiche tryeth our herettes. Neither led we out conuersation at any time with flatteryng wordes, as ye knowe:neither by occasion of couertousnesse . God is record: neither sought we paryle of incune, neither of you, nor yet of any other, when we might haue been in autorite, as the Apostles of Christe, but we were tendre among you, euen as a mothe cherishest her childdren, so were we affectionned toward you:our good will was to haue deale vnto you, not the gospell of God only:but also our owne soules, because ye were deare vnto vs.



Hath nedeth vs to make rehersall, seting ye your selues knowe, that albeit we came not vnto you, with b;ag-
ging and staring, no; curiously mincing a sorte of great
wordes, no; setting out any high Philosophie: Yet our
entraunce vnto you was not vnffectuall. But where
as wee had suffred many thinges at Philippes before,
as you your selues knowe, and were shamefully hand-
led with many spightefull rebukes, and so was Silas
also, because of castynge the propheeteng spirite out of the Damsel, that was
possessed: yet neuertheles through the helpe of our God, we were not afraied
euен to preache the gospel of Christ frelye among you also, and not without
excedyng great daungier: wheras in case we had preached a foyged vapne
thyng, we shold never haue ben in daunger of our head for that matter. For
suche men as teache theyz owne doctrine, and not that, whiche they haue re-
ceaved of Christ, and teache for theyz owne avauntage, intending therby to
disceave others for theyz owne luctes sake: those haue no auto;ritie of theyz
doctrine at al, and d;awe themselues quite a way, as sone as they d;rede any
daungier of theyz lyues or substaunce. But the doctrine, wherunto we allu-
red you, was not couterfaicted, ne fayned, neyther purposed vnto disceave, ne
yet vnder colourable pretence of it, we haue cloked impure sciences, as the
false apostles do, no; haue doen any thing fraudulētie, pretending in out-
wardē apperaunce one waye, and purposynge inwardly cleane contrarie an o-
ther waye, and vnder the title of Ch;riste go about our owne pelfe, after the
maner of them, that make themselues Apostles: but like as god by his sonne
hathe chosen vs vnto this office, that we shoulde sincerely preache the gos- God sende
vs suchē
pell committed vnto vs, eu'en so do we preache vnto all men, nor to crepe in picachers.
fauour or commendacion with menne, but to do our office so as god may al-
lowe it, who seeth the inward secretes of our hartes, and accōdingly thereto
estemeth euery man. For we haue not flatred any man, as you know at least,
nether haue we turned the wōrde of the gospel, no; your tractable beleuyng
into oure owne gayne, god himselfe is witnesse vnto our consciences: nether
haue we hunted after the p;ayse of men by meanes of the gospell, either at
your handes or of any other, wheras we myght haue vled our auto;ritie, and
b;ag no lesse thā the false Apostles: which though they teache bayne thinges
to their own gayne, yet they require to be honoured & waited vpon of you.
But we considering what becometh the apostles of Christe, which humbled
himself for our saluacions sake, haue not taken vpō vs to b;ag & loke hygh,
but haue shewed our selues gentill & sobre among you, not eagrely abusing
you, as discipiles, but w al lenitie bearing wth your weaknesse, none other-
wise than a mother nource would chearilie the tender age of her child;en: &
so we being louingly affected towardes you, wer hartely desirous to impart
vnto you, not onlye the ghsopell of god as the foode of your soules, but also
to bestowe our owne life: not that we looked for any reward at your handes,
but that we loued you entierly wth all our hertes, none otherwise than a
mother louch her owne child;en. We vpb;ayd you not of our diligence, but
we rehearse our louing affection.

Ye remember b;rethen oure laboures, & trauyale. For we laboured dare and myght be-
cause we would not be chargeable vnto any of you, & preached vnto you the gospel of God.
Ye are witnessesse, & so is god, how holily & iustly and unblameably, we behaued our selues
among you that beleued, as ye knowe, how that we bare suchē affection vnto every one of
AAA.III. you

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the i. Epistle

you, as a father doth unto children, exhortyng, confortyng, and beseechynge you, that ye knowe de[m]a[n]de worthy of God, whiche hath called you unto his kyngdome and glory. For thys cause thanke we God also without ceasynge, because that when ye receaued us the w[or]ord (wherewith ye learned to knowe God) ye receaued it not as the w[or]ord of man: but euen as it was in dede, the w[or]ord o[ne] God, which worketh also in you that beleue.

You rememb[re] b[ro]ther[en], that we forsoke no laboure nor no traualle for your sakes, thy[ing] no; mynding any other thyng els than your saluation. And we hunted so litell for rewarde at your handes, that we wrought with our handelabour daye and night, to get our lyuing withal, because we would be a burthen to none of you all. The false apostles cloute in their gospel among you, and wypthe to them selues as muche as they can get: and we haue preached the gospel of god vnto you freely without any thing. And you are my witnessess, and god himselfe is my record, how holily, how vp[er]ightely, and how vnbلاameable we haue behaued oure selues towarde you that beleued, as you know by your[ow]n experience, with how sincere a loue we did al thinges, that towardes every one of you we were euen so affected, as any father is towardes his owne children, now beseching, now comforting, now chargyng you, not to geue vs any thing, but to leade a lyfe worthy of god, whiche, whan you were afore tyme voyde of all godlynesse, hath called you throughe fayeth to the studie of true godlynesse, and hathe also throughe tem[ptation] all afflictions, called you into his kingdome and glori Immortal. All is well: you acknowleage the goodnesse of God: and for that cause we also redere thankes vnto him continuallie, for kendlyng your heartes after such sorte, that whan we came in a poore basse estate vnto you and hauyng no shewe of dignitie to set vs forwarde, yet as soone as you had hearde the gospell preached of vs, you receaued it, not as a fable o[ne] the w[or]ord of man, but as the w[or]ord that came frō god himself, as it was in dede: for he himselfe spake euē by vs.

The seconde.

For ye brethren became folowers of the congregacions of God whiche in Jewry are in Chri & Iesu: for ye haue suffered lyke thynges of your kyndme, as we oure selues haue suffered of the Jewes. Whiche as they kyld the Lord Iesu, and theyr owne prophetes, euen so haue they persecuted vs: and God they please not, and are contrary to all men, and h[ate] vs, that we shold not speake vnto the Gentiles, that they myght be saued, to fulfil the prophecies alwaye. For the wrath of God is come on them, euen to the vtmost.

The w[or]ord of man is weake & vn effectual, but the w[or]ord of god is effectually mightie: whiche, as soone as you had donken of it, was not ydle, but began to worke his power in you, so as it myght evidently ynough appeare, þ you had receaued the same spirite, in þ you incontinently began to follow the exāples of the other congregacions of god þ professed Jesus Christ in Jewrie. That, whiche Christ: that, that we:that, that the rest of the Jewes whiche embrace the doctrine of the gospel, haue suffered of their owne countrey menne, vnto whome this doctrine is odious, the like haue you also suffered of your owne townes men. For like as they kyld the lord Iesu, & slew his prophetes before him, because they could not abyde the trueth: euen so do they also persecute vs that are the true gospel preachers, with such blindnes of harte, that they prouoke euen the wrath of god vpon themselues, because they rebell against his will, & go against al men, as the very enemys of mankind, & as men that enuite al mens saluacion which is offred throughe faith, & go about to draw al men w[th] them into destrucciō. For they do not let vs after this sort of any priuate displeasure, but they enuy all the gentiles their wealth, and trouble vs for this intent, that we shold not preach the gospel vnto the gentiles.

of S. Paul to the Thessalonians. Cap.ii. Fol.iii.

gentiles, wherby they myght be saued: as thought were but a sinal matter for the to haue slayne the Prophete before; and byanby Christ after the Prophete, except they persecute and dispatch vs out of the waye also: so as they may finish the whole heape of their mischeues, and lay this, as it were the Summe totall of their wickednesse, alwayes to be like mannered to themselves, and neuert to repent from their madnesse. By reason wherof they prouoke the wrath of God so sore vpon them, that they are to be despaired of, for somuch as of a purposed malice they spurne awaie the mercy of God from the, and by al possible meanes oppugne the gospel, throught whose onely helpe they myght be deliuered from destruction.

The text
For as muche brethren as we are kept from you for a season, as concerning the bodily presence (but not in the herte) we enforced the more to see you personally with great desyre. And therfore we would haue come vnto you, I paul once and agayne: but Satan withstood vs. For what is our hope or ioy, or crowne of reioyning: are not ye it in the presence of our Lorde Jesus Christes at his cumming: yes, ye are our glory and ioy.

But the more I loue you, brethren, for the readinesse and promptitude of your faythe, the more I am enflamed with the louyng desyre of you, because beynge kepte from you for a tyme, I coulde not haue the fruicion of your company, wherof I was wondrefullly desirous, although we were neuuer absent in minde. And yet this could not satisfie þ loue that we beare towardes you, except I shoulde also presentlie se you euuen with my bodyly eyes. Wherfore I thought it not ynoch, to send any boode to you, or to speake with you by letters, but I Paul went about once and estenes to come to you my selfe, so as I myght the more throughly confirme your consciences: But Satan withstood this purposed endeour, which by the wicked Jewes hyndred my cumyng vnto you. And what maruayle is it, though I bee so desirous of you? For what other thyng is there in this world, wherwith I can content my selfe, wherof I may aduaunce my selfe, wherof I maye perswade my selfe to inherite felicitie? I defie all thinges incomparision of the gospel of Christ. Than what is our hope, or what is our ioye, or what is our crowne? Among others of the gentiles whom I haue wonne vnto Christ, are not you also - albeit not in the sight of the world, yet verly it is with the Lorde Jesus Christ. Whan the enemys of the gospell are thowen vnder foote, and the triumphe openly kepte at his cuming, what ensignes and what other tokens of victorijhal I bring forthe in that royll company, but you and suche other luke as you be? In the meane tyme I am in assured hope of these thinges. You are the fruite & the mater of our glorie, you are our ioye, in case you perseuer vnto the ende in those thinges that you haue begonne.

The.iii.Chapiter.

Wherfore, sence we coulde no lenger forbeare, we thought it good to remayne at The text
thens alone, and sent Tymothe our brother & minister of God, and the helper forth of our labour in the gospel of Christ to stablishe you: and to comforte you concerning oure faith, that no man should be moued in these afflictions. For ye poure selues knowe, that we are even appoynted thereto. For whan we were with you, we told you before, that we shoulde suffer tribulacion, euen as it came to passe, and as ye knowe. For thys cause whent I could no lenger forbeare, I sent, that I might haue knowledge of your faith, lest by some meanes the tempter had tempted you, and lest oure labour had bene vexted in vayne.

Therefore

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the i. Epistle



Herfore,inasmuche as we coulde not suffre the wante of you any longer, and seyng I coulde not come my selfe to you , I thought it good,to doe that by my mooste faythfull companiōn,that I coulde not doe by my selfe : and to put him in stede of my selfe. Therfore we taried still alone at Athenes , and from thence sente Tymothe our brother,a tryed minister of God, and an helpefelo we of our office, which we haue to doe in the gospell of Christ: because we had leauer wante the comforste of that so deare a singular and so necessarie a companion for the tyme , than to geue occasion that you should thinke we had vtterly geuen ouer lokyng to your state of thinges. And verily we haue sente hym,not for any cause of our owne, but chiefly for your sakes, that he myght establishe and comforste your consciences, and to shewe you, that for all these paynfull afflictions, wherewith I am tossed hereawaye and therawaye, myne harte is nothing discouraged, but the glorie of the gospell is a great deale better auanced, leste any of you shoulde be dismayed, by reason of myne afflictions, whiche you haere tell of. For you must not thinke it any newtie, though these thinges happen to the preachers of the gospell, in asmuche as you knewe a good while a goe, that I was chosen of god to this same ende, that through suffring of afflictions of my body, I myght auance the name of Christ: and so in this behalfe to be like my Lord and maister. For euē than whan we were present with you, we tolde you the same before, that we shoulde suffice affliccion for the gospelles sake. And as I tolde you before it shoulde be, so you see it now happened, like as also you haue knownen it happen before. As for me, there was nothing hapened vnto me unlooked for, nor any thig that I tolde not you of afore, so as you haue the lesse cause to be discouraged. Wherefore, considering that for the great care I take for you (euē whan all thing is at the surest) I coulde not be quiet but long after you still , I sent Tymothe (as I sayed afore) for this purpose, that by hym (as well in a maner as I were present theremy selfe) I might knowe the stedfastnesse of your fayth , and might trye, yf he that kepereth continuall watche to subuerte them that be good , had tempted any of the weaker sorte of you, and so in them my labour had been losse.

The texte.

But nowe lately, whan Timothe came from you vnto vs, and declared to vs your fayth and loue, and how that ye haue good remembraunce of vs alwaye, desirynge to see vs as we also desyre to see you. Therfore brethren we received consolaciōn by you,in al our aduersitie and necessitie through your fayth. For none are we alyue, yf ye stande stedfast in the Lord. For what thankes can we recompence to God againe for you, ouer al that ioy, that we ioy for your sakes before our God: praying nyght and daye exceedingly, that we might see you presently, and might fulkyll the thynges whiche are lacking vnto your fayth? God hymselfe our father, and our Lord Jesus Christ shall gyde oure iourney vnto you: the Lord also shall increase you and make you shewe ouer in loue one towarde another, and towarde all men, euē as we do toward you: that he may make your heartes stalle and vnblameable, in holynes before God oure fathet, at the commyng of our Lord Jesus Christ with al saynetes.

But whan Timothe of late returned from you to vs againe , and brought vs mery tydinges , shewing that you persiste aswell constauntly in your fayth without shrinking, as also that your vnseyned charitie is the same that it was, and that our beeving a sondrie hathe not brought vs out of remembraunce with you, but that you haue vs in mynde alwayes continually,

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cōtinually, and that you are euer desirous to see vs, as we are to see you: there is no necessarie nor any sorowe, that I am pressed withall, but I can beare it paciently sence I knewe that you abode constantly in your fayth, whiche whan I was afayed of, I was nothing afayed of my selfe. for I thinke that I am altogether safe, if your fayth continue safe. Howe we liue, and thinke our selfes delinered from al maner of daūgier, in case you, through the helpe of Christ Jesu, persiste constantly in y^e you haue begun. It yrketh not me to suffre these euils, so that the frutes be answerable in you, for whose sakes I abyde them. Whiche thyng, for asmuche as I perceyue to be in dede, so as the gospel groweth in acquayntaunce among the Gentiles dayly more and more, what thankes worthy so great a benefite are we able to redre vnto God by whose goodnes so excellent to y^e, wherwith we reioyce withal our hartes for your forward proceeding, chau-
ceth vnto vs euен among these sorowes, our God beryng recorde of the same, vnto whose goodnesse you are bounde for that you continue bed-
faste: of whome oure duecie is in our prayers daye and nighte, to defyre
this thing in moxe ample wise, that by his mercy we may at one tyme o^r
other see you agayne. for with personall presence, somethng is doen,
that nother letters nor messenger, how trustie so euer he be, can be hable
to accomlishe. for this cause sake therfore, I am desirous to see you, to
the entent if any gospellyke discipline be wanting, I might supplie it and
amende it. Furthermore my prayer is, that where I cannot so doe by mea-
nes of wicked persones, God himselfe our father and his sonne Jesus
Christe our Lorde would bouchesafe to take awaie those lettes, & open
me a free passage vnto you, and also in the meane season so to encrease you
with his gyftes, that I may see you to my great comforde. Whiche thyng
shalbe, in case he make you abondaunte and plenteouse in mutuall charitie
among your selues: and not among your selues only, but also towardes
all men, llike as we also haue a certayne excellencie of loue towardes
all you, being ready euen to suffre death for your saluacion: and that he
would so confirme your consciences, that your vprightness cannot be
blamed on any behalfe, not only with meyne, but muche rather with God
the father, whom nothing escapeth, in the cumming of our Lorde Jesus
Christe, at which time it shall openly appeare in the sight of all Sanctes,
not only what every one hath doen, but also with what conscience every
one hath done it.

[The iii. Chapter.]

Furthermore, we beseeche you (brethren) and exhorte you by the Lord Jesu, that ye in-
crease more and more, euen as ye haue receyued of vs, how ye ought to walke and to please
God. For ye shewe what commandementes we gaue you by our Lord Jesu Christ. for
this is the will of God euē in your holynes, that ye should abstaine from fornicacyon, and
that every one of you shoule know how to kepe his vessel in holynes & honour, not in the
luste of concupiscentie as doe the heathen, which know not God, that no man opysse and de-
fraude his brother in bargayning: because that the Lord is the auenger of al such thinges,
as we tolde you before, and testified. for God hath not called vs unto vniclenes, but vns-
to holynes. Be therfore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, whiche hath sente his
holy spirite among you.

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the i. Epistle

Moreover brethren we beseeche and exhorte you by the Lorde Jesus, forasmuche as you are nowe sufficiently taught of vs , after what sorte you ought to behau your selues, and with what endeouours to please God; geue your diligence not only to perseuer still in that you haue learned, but also to excede your selues in dayly encreases of forewardenesse. For you knowe and remembre what preceptes I gaue, not by the autorite of my selfe, but by the auoritie of our Lorde Jesus Christe. I gaue none of these thynges in commandement that the false Apostles cloute in among you, of the ceremonies of Moses lawe, of the excellencie and visions of Angels , as though there were entraunce by them vnto saluation: but those thynges only that I knewe certaynly to be acceptable vnto God . For this is the wyll of God, that you kepe your selues holy and vnsotted , and not onely to be chaste in soule, but also in body, that you may abstayne from whoredome wherwith the bodies are defiled. The body is the dwellyng house of the soule, and the soule is the Inne of God. Than lyke as it is necessarie for the soule to be pure, because of the geaste God: so is it decente for the boody to be pure because of the enhabitour, the soule. Therfore let euery one knowe howe to geue this honoure to his sely carcass, as a frayle vessel, that he kepe it cleane and vndeftiled: and not suffre it to be spotted with the disease of filthy desyres and lustes : whiche thyng is so farre vnwoorthy the state of Christians, that it is the state of no nacion of people, but of them that haue no knowlage of God, but thinke that euery one may lawfully doe what he lusteth without punishment, and that all is honest that is pleasant to the body. But the mischefe of lust doubleth his mischefe, in case a man Joyne st with the Inurie of his brother: as whan a man vsurpeth an other mannes wyfe. Let no man therfore eyther in this case or in other matters , in vsurpyng ouermuche to hymselfe , defraude his brother, forasmuche as God wil suffer none of these thinges vntreuenged: and sayng that baptisme shal not onely not availe them that commit these offences, but also make to their more greuouse punishmente, lyke as we haue tolde a recorded vnto you before. For God hath not called vs from the ordinaunce of our former lyfe, to the entente that beyng once washen cleane we shold be walowed into the same filthinesse again: but to mainteyne in holynesse and puritie of lyfe the innocencie that was once freely geuen vs . And that we shold not through filthy desyres cast awaie from vs the holy ghoste , whiche is the loun of Chastitie.

These matters (I say) I haue both recorded and doe recorde again, that they are not the preceptes of me but of God: so that whosoeuer contemneth them, contemneth not man which is the warning geuer, but God that is the commaundement maker: who hath emparted his holy spirite vnto you, for this purpose, that you shold by his inspiration embrace godlinesse. Against this holy spirite every one worketh despite, that through filthy lustes polluteth his owne body.

The texte.

But as touchyng brotherly loue, ye nede not, that I wryte vnto you. For ye are taught of God, to loue one an other, ye and that thing verily ye doe vnto all the brethren whiche are in all Macedonia. We beseeche you brethren, that ye encrease more and more, & that

of S. Paule to the Thessalonians. Cap. iii. fol. vi

ye study to be quiete, and to medle with your owne busynes, and to worke with your handes, as we commaunded you: that ye may behau your selues honestly toward them that are without, and that nothing be lacking vnto you.

Furthermore, as concertenng the loue that chris^tians owe to christians, I thinke it not necessarie for me to admonishe you by these my letters. For you are taught immedately from heauen by the spirite of Christ (whereof you haue tasted) that ye shoulde loue one another. Whiche thyng you declare in very dede, in that you loue all the brethren with a christian loue, not onelye that are at Thessalonica, but also in al Macedonia. Myne exhortacion therfore shall not be vnto you, to do the thyng that you do of your owne accord; but in that, that you do by admonicion of the spirite, to excede your selues, and go forwarde alwayes better and better. And looke you geure circumspect hede, that your quietnesse be not interrupted by meanes of idle persones, and suche as be curios meddlers of oþer mennes mattiers, but let euery one applie his owne busynesse. And yf any want substaunce wherof to lyue, let hym prouide with his owne handes, so as he maye bothe helpe hymselfe, and releue them that be nedie, like as we commaunded you before: to the intent ye mighte behau your selues honestly towardes them, that haue not professed Christ: at whose handes it were shame for you to profesyon, either to begge or to do any uncomelier thyng for nede. But rather let euery one get with his handes, so as he want no necessary thyng. And that man is easly satisfied, that is content with a little.

I woulde not breþhen that ye shoulde be ignoraunte concertenng them whiche are fallen asleepe, that ye sorowe not as oþer do, whiche haue no hope. For if we beleue that Jesus dyed, and rose agayne: even so them also whiche slepe by Jesus, wyl God bryng agayne with hym. For this saye we vnto you in the wrode of the Lord, that we which shal lyue, and shal remayne in the commyng of the Lord, shal not come ere th^ey whiche slepe. For the Lord himselfe shal descend from heauen, with a shewe, and the voyce of the Archangell and troupe of God. And the dead in Christ shall arise first: then we whiche shall lyue (even we whiche shal remayne) shal be caught vp with them also in the clouds, to meeue the Lord in the ayre. And so shall we euer be with the Lord. Wherefore, comforste your selues one another with these wordes.

Finally, as touchyng the mistery of the resurrection, I cannot be contēt to haue you ignoraunte, leste you shoulde make importune sorrowfull mourning for them, that slepe in the truse of the promyses of the gospell, as thoughē they perished: that you shoulde not mourne. I saye, after the example of the gentiles, whiche bewayle the death of theyr frendes, because they haue no hope of theyr resurreccion. But the death of christians is noþyng els but a slepe, from the whiche they shal awake agayne at the commyng of Christ, to lyue a great deale more blisfully. For why shoulde we not trusse, the same thyng to come to passe in the membris, that we knowe alreadye perfourmed in the head? For if we beleue verely, that Jesus was deade after þ maner of man, & rose agayne to immortall life, it foloweth of necessitte, that we ought to beleue also, that god the father, whiche raysed vp Jesus, wyl also bring with him those that professed Jesus and slept in the assuted truse of his promyses, alye agayne at the commyng of his sonne, so as the heade shal not wante his membris. We bable not vnto you an humayne fable, but we tell you the thyng that we learned of Christes hymselfe, that is to wete, that we, whiche shal be founde remaining alue in this world at the lordes coming,

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the i. Epistle

shal not be presented in the sight of Jesus, before that they whiche were dead afore, be presented also. Some wil saye: how shall it be possible for them to be presented, that were buried and turned into duste? Euen the Lorde Jesus himselfe by the voyce of the aungell soundyng out of heauen with the trompette of God shal rapsye them vp and warne them to awake and come quickly. And than suche as had slept in this hope, shall returne agayne vnto lyfe, and ryse out of they; graues. And that doen, we that shall remayne and bee founde alyue in the cumming of Christ, shall be sodainly taken vp together with them that are raised againe vnto life, through the cloudes, that we may mete the Lorde in the ayer. And from thence he shal carrie vs with him into heauen, to lue with him perpetuallite. Now therfore, see you comfort euerie one another with these sayinges, so as the death of the godly vere you not to sore, inasmuche as it is more worthy oratulations and rejoycings, than your sorrowfull lamentacions.

The b. Chapter.

The terte.

Fynally of the tymes and seasons (brethren) it is no neade that I write vnto you: for ye your selues knowe perfectely, that the daye of the Lorde shall come, euen as a thefe in the nyght. For when they shal saye, peace, and al thynges are safe, then shal sodain destrukcyon come vpon them (as sorow commeth upon a woman travaylyng with chylde) & they shal not scape. But ye brethren are not in darckenes, that that daye shoud come ou you as a thefe.



¶ If you haue the maner and ordre of the resurreccyon, inasmuche as it was conuenient for you to knowe it. But as for the tymes and the very seasons whan these thynges shal be, it is no parte of our office to write vnto you. And it is so unauayleable, that euen the lord himself would open no suche thyng vnto his disciples whan they demaunded it of hym.

For you knowe playnlye, and we haue taught you before, that the daye of the Lorde shal come sodainly vpon the wold vnlooked for, euen as a thefe in the night, breaketh in vpon them that are asleepe: and shall ouerlaye them that are careles, than moste chiefely, whan it shall be the least loked for. For whan suche as beleue not the gospel, shal saye in they; moste Joylytie, there is no daungier, but all is peace and safe, the Lord wyll not come: than they; destruccyon shall come sodainlye vpon them, like as a woman with childe is sodainly payned with sorowe in her trauayle, before the daye commeth that she loked for. And they shal haue no waye to escape oppression, before they fele it sodainly vpon them. That daye shal be a dreadfull daye, to them that beyng blynded in they; owne viciousnes, leade their lyfe as it were in the night: but vnto you brethren, it is not so dreadefull lesse it shoud take you vnprouyded.

The ferte.

Ye are all the chyldren of lyght, and the chyldren of the daye. We are not of the nyght nether of darckenes. Therfore let vs not slepe as do other; but let vs watche, and be sober. For they that slepe, slepe in the night, and they that be drucken, are dronken in the nyght. But let vs whiche are of the daye, be sober, armed with the brest plate of fayth and loue, & with hope of saluacion for an helmet. For God hath not appoynted vs to provoke wrath vnto our selues, but to obtaine saluacion by the meanes of oure Lord Jesu Christ, which dyed for vs: that whether we wake or slepe, we shoud liue together with hym. Wherfore, conforte your selues together, and ediffe every one another, euen as ye do.

of S. Paule to the Thessalonians. Cap. v. fol. vii.

For all you that folowe Christe, belong not to the kyngdome of dackenes, but to the kyngdome of light and of god, namely yf oure diligence of godlynesse be aunswerable to our profession, and yf we lyue so, as it maye appere that we watche in the dayelight and not lye snoutryng in dackenesse. Therfore if we wil not be taken vnwares, let vs not sleape, as other do, that haue no knowlage of Christes lyght: but let vs watche and be sober, taking alwayes circumspet hede, that we comit nothing through vnadvisednesse, that maye offend the iyes of God and men. So; like as they that slepe after the bodie, sleape in the night, and those that are wyned;unken, are drunken in the night: even so those that pawne and slumbre in naughtinesse, are occupied in dackenesse of the soule, and those that are drunken with the lustes & daliaunces of the wold, are entangled with dackenes of the mynde. But as so; vs vnto whom the daie of the gospel hath cast his light, it standeth vs in hande to be sober and watchyng, alwayes prepared and ready agaynst the sodayne assaulte of the enemie, that kepereth continuall watche so; oure destruction: and to be harnessed with spirituall armour: In stede of a breste plate to put on fayth and charitie: so; the helmet, hope of eternall saluacion. And than shal you not ned to distruste. God will be ready himselfe to defend those that be watching. So; god hath not called vs to the doctrine of the gospell so; this purpose, that lyuing otherwyse than it maketh mencion, we shal double the wrath and vengeance of God vpon vs, but that in obeying hym we might obteyne saluacion, by the helpe of our Lorde Jesu Christ, who suffred death for vs, to the intent, that if it chaunce vs to lyue, we maye lyue with hym through godlynnesse and hope of immortallitie, and if it chaunce vs to dye, we maye lyue with hym neuer to dye. To thintent that you maye so do more and more, encourage euery one other with mutuallexhortacions, and systre one another to goe on forwarde, like as you do alreadye euen of your owne accorde.

We beseeche you brethmen that ye knowe them whiche laboure among you, and haue the oer sight of you in the Lord, and geue you exhortacion, that ye haue them in yhe re-puation thoro woulde, for they; workes sake, and be at peace with them.

Furthermoore we beseeche you, brethmen, to haue consideracion of them, that labour among you, and haue oer sight of you in teachyng of the ghosspell, and do admonishe you with what thynges you ought to please Christ: that where you are bounden to geue honoure vnto all men, yet haue them in regard aboue others, requiting the the loue, that they bestow vnto you in susteynyng so many laboures and daunglers for your sakes. And yf they reprehende you for your faultes at any tyme, yet haue peace with them. So; heig not wrothysce to be hated, that reproueth a man for his profite.

We despise you (brethren) warne them that are vnuelye, confort the feble myndes, lifte up the weake, be patient toward all men. He that none recompence evill for evill vnto any man: but euer folowe that, whiche is good, both among your selues, and to all men. Reioice euere, & yare continually. In all thynges geue thankes. For this is the will of God thoro Christ Iesu toward you. Quench not the spaire. Despise not prophetynges. Examen all thynges, kepe that whiche is good. Absayne from all euil apperance. The very god of peace sanctifie you thoro we out. And I praye God that yourt whole spaire, and soule and body, mape be preserued: so that in nothing ye mape be blamed in the

The paraphrase of Erasimius upon the i. Epistle

commynge of our Lorde Iesus Christ. Faythfull is he whiche called you, whiche will also do it. Brethren, praye for vs. Greet all the brethren with an holy kyss. I charge you in the Lorde, that this Epistle be red unto all the holy brethren. The grace of the Lorde Iesus Christ be with you. Amen.

And thus I beseche you (euertye man accordyng to his habssitle) to lape your helppynge handes to the forwardyng of their offices. Admonishe them that lyue after their owne lustes and disquyter the oþre that you obserue. Comforde the weake harted, releue the feble, be gentill and paciēt towardes all men, not onely towardes the Christians, but also them that are straungers from Christ. Beware that none recompense w̄ong for w̄ong, nor te- quite euill dede for euill dede. For truly it is vnsemynge to folowe the ex- ample of naughtie persones in a naughty matier, and become lyke condic- oned vnto them. But rather geue diligence to do good vnto all folkes, not onely the christians vnto christians, but also vnto all maner of folkes, whe- ther they haue deserued it or not deserued it: beyng certaynly assured, þ your diligence shall not be lost: for Christ is your succor. In consideracion wher- of, whatsoeuer chaunceth vnto you, rejoyce alwayes so that godlynesse bee safe: call vpon God with your prayers continually without ceasyng, and geue thankes whatsoeuer befalleth you. For so it standeth with gods plea- sure, that there shall be occasion alwayes, to rendre thankes vnto the father for his bounteysnes to youwarde by Iesus Christ. And this furthermore standeth you in hande to take hede of, that no variaunce rise among you by reason of euery ones sond; ye soxte of giftes. Unto some one chaunceth the gift of tongues, to syng in the spirite: albeit it is but a gift of the basest sorte, yet quenche it not in any wise, but cherishe it rather, þ it maye p̄ofyte better and better. Unto some chaunceth the gifte of prophecie, to declare the mis- call sence of the scripture: reiecte it not in any wyse whatsoeuer is spoken.

Suffre the one patiently that he maye go on forwarde, heare the others se- tence, with iudgement: but after suche sorte that he be not to muche molested in his speakyng. Let no man make so muche of his owne giftes, that he con- temne another mannes. Trye al thynges, but let euery man holde the thing that he iudgeth requisite. Whatsoeuer it be that hath þ similitude of a good thyng, is not to be despised. Not withstandyng it behoueth you to abhōre so muche from euil, that you ought to absteyne euen from those thynges, that haue the shewe of euil. But vnto these matters, it shall be your parte to ap- plie all your diligent studiēs. And god the auctor of peace, vnto whō is ac- ceptable both the lyke consent of mynde & the like speache of wordes that mē do wholy vse together in suche thynges as be honest, byng to passe, þ you maye be perfittely holy, & vnspotted, so as the soule maye be answerable vnto the spirite, the body aunswerable to the soule, & the spirite selfe answer- able to God: þ there be nothyng to fynde you faultie in, & that you maye stilly perseuer in this state of holynesse continually, vntil the cumming of our lord Iesus Christ. There is no cause for you to distruste of. For he is sure of his promyse, that hath called you vnto this holynesse, & to the rewardes of the same: he hymselfe shall finishe that he hath begonne, and perfourme that he hath promised. Brethren, helpe you forwarde with your prayers the la- bours that we go aboue. Salute all the brethren with a kyss, not suche a one as the commune sorte of salutours doe geue, but with an holye kyss
and

of S. Paul to the Thessalonians. Cap. b. Fol. bsis.
and worthy Christian loue. I charge you by the Lorde, that this Epistle
be rehearsed to al the holy brethren. The grace and beneuolent fauour of
our Lorde Jesu Christe be alwayes with you. Amen.

Thus endeth the paraphrase vpon the first Epistle
of S. Paul the Apostle to the
Thessalonians.

The Argument vpon the seconde Epistle of S. Paul the Apostle to the Thessa- lonians by Des. Erasmus of Rote- rodame.

Erasmuche as Paul coulde not haue libertie to goe see the Thessalonians agayne, he confirmeth their consciences by Epistle, that they myght manfully suffre the afflictions layed vpon them for Christes sake: seyng that they shall not want reward, nor the aduersaries escape punishment. Againe, concerning the daye of the Lordes cumming, wherof he touched somewhat in the farther Epistle, he warneth them that they be not styrred with the sayinges of some, that affirme as though it were at hande: and as some thinke signifisth closely that the Empire of Rome must be first dispatched and Antichriste to come after that. Moreouer he beateth into theyr heades very earnestly, to restrayne suche as with their idlenes & nice curiositic haue been disturbours of the commune quietnes and ordre: and to enforce them vnto labour, in asmuche as Paul himselfe laboured among them with his owne handes. This Epistle he wroote from Athens by thesame men that he sente the farther Epistle by, as it is recorded by our argu-
mentes. BSBb.li.

The ende of the argumente.